

Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 SY-03 EB-11 IO-14 AID-20 COME-00

DRC-01 /152 W

----- 012830

R 051837Z APR 74

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 636

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDON DERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 39

APRIL 5, 1974.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY REACTION TO N.I. SECRETARY OF STATE REES

APRIL 4 STATEMENT ON ULSTER.

SUMMARY: N.I. SECRETARY OF STATE REES' APRIL 4 STATEMENT TO COMMONS ON ULSTER EVOKED PRELIMINARY RESPONSES HERE RANGING FROM HOSTILE TO COOL. MAIN COMMENTS AIMED, NATURALLY, AT PROPOSED SPONSORSHIP SCHEME FOR RELEASE OF DETAINEES AND AT DE-PROSCRIPTION OF (PROVISIONAL) SINN FEI AND UVF. GENERALLY, UNIONISTS (OF WHATEVER STRIPE THOUGHT REES INSUFFICIENTLY HARDLINE ON DEFEAT OF TERRORISM, MINORITY SPOKESMEN WELCOMED MOVEMENT ON DETENTION BUT MADE CLEAR THEY WOULD BE SATISFIED ONLY WITH EVEN MORE "PROGRESS". END SUMMARY.

1. FIRST REACTIONS HERE TO APRIL 4 COMMONS SPEECH ON ULSTER BY N.I. SECRETARY OF STATE REES RANGED FROM HOSTILE TO COOL.

2. FAULKNER WAS "VERY, VERY UNHAPPY" ABOUT SECURITY ASPECTS

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OF REES' STATEMENT. FAULKNER THOUGHT THAT CONTINING DRAW DOWN

OF TROOPS WOULD LEAVE ULSTER "NAKED" BECAUSE POLICE, "CIVILIANIZED" BY HMG, ARE NOT CAPABLE NOW OF DEALING WITH GUERILLA WAR, THAT DE-PROSCRIBING OF PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN IGNORES FACT THERE IS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN SINN FEIN AND IRA, AND THAT DE-PROSCRIBING OF UVF IS UNJUSTIFIED SINCE IT IS PURELY EXTREMIST ORGANIZATION WITH NO POLITICAL ROLE ANYWAY. HIS FIRST REACTION DID NOT TOUCH ON REES' SCHEME FOR RELEASE OF DETAINEES TO SPONSORS. BUT ROY BRADFORD SAID THAT, WHILE HE OPPOSES DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL IN PRINCIPLE, HE IS AGAINST RELEASING DETAINEES NOW. HE THINKS REES IS TAKING A "GAMBLE."

3. SDLP REACTION, FROM BOTH FITT AND CURRIE, FOCUSED ON RELEASE OF DETAINEES, CALLING REES' SPONSORSHIP SCHEME "PROGRESS." FITT ALSO APPROVED DE-PROSCRIPTION OF SINN FEIN AND UVF. CURRIE POINTED OUT THAT TO ULSTER'S TROUBLE THERE CAN ONLY BE POLITICAL SOLUTION, AND THEREFORE ENGAGEMENT OF ALL POLITICAL ELEMENTS, "HOWEVER MADCAP," IN POLITICAL DIALOGUE IS DESIRABLE.

4. REPUBLICAN SPOKESMEN ALSO CONCENTRATED ON PROBLEM OF DETENTION, AND THOUGHT ALL DETAINEES SHOULD BE RELEASED UNCONDITIONALLY. SOME COMMENTATORS WONDERED WHAT WOULD BE FATE OF THOSE FOR WHOM SPONSOR COULD NOT BE FOUND. ASSOCIATION FOR LEGAL JUSTICE, LONG REGARDED AS PROVIE FRONT, JUSTIFIED UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE BY NOTING THAT "ONLY ABOUT EIGHT" OF 63 DETAINEES RELEASED BY SECRETARY OF STATE PYM AT CHRISTMAS TIME HAVE BEEN RE-DETAINED (ALTHOUGH ABOUT TWO-THIRDS HAVE BEEN REARRESTED AND RELEASED, SOME MANY TIMES OVER). NICRA (CONSIDERED DOMINATED BY OFFICIALS) DIRECTED ITS MAIN COMMENTS TO PROPOSED CONTINUATION OF EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT, RUC AND DETENTION: EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT INSURCES RUC WILL BE PARA-MILITARY AND UNACCEPTABLE FORCE, RUC MUST PURGE ITSELF OF "CRIMINAL ELEMENTS WITHIN ITS RANKS," AND RELEASE OF DETAINEES MUST BE UNCONDITIONAL. SINN FEIN VICE PRESIDENT MAIRE DRUMM DISMISSED DE-PROSCRIPTION OF SINN FEIN: "WE HAVE ALWAYS REGARDED OURSELVES AS LEGAL, ANYWAY." ON TV SHE REFUSED UVF SPOKESMAN'S CHALLENGE TO TRY PERSUADE PROVIES TO DECLARE CEASEFIRE, BUT SAID HER ORGANIZATION WOULD BE WILLING TO TALK TO ANY OTHER, INCLUDING UVF.

5. UVF SPOKESMEN WELCOMED DE-PROSCRIPTION AND PROSPECTIVE RELEASE OF DETAINEES. UVF HAS BEEN HINTING AT INCREASED INTEREST

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IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY, BUT ON EVEN TV NEWS SHOW SPOKESMAN SAID UVF WOULD NOT TALK TO IRA. UVF WILL, RATHER, PUT ITS POLITICAL VIEWS FORWARD THROUGH ELECTED POLITICIANS IN UNITED LOYALIST COALITION, I.E. HUGH SMYTH, WEST BELFAST ASSEMBLYMAN AND RECENT SPOKESMAN FOR UVF POINT OF VIEW.

6. PAISLEY'S FIRST REACTION CONFINED ITSELF TO WONDERING WHAT IS USE OF MAKING SINN FEIN AND UVF POLITICALLY LEGAL IF THERE

ISN'T GOING TO BE AN ELECTION FOR FOUR YEARS ANYWAY. (IN FACT,
REES SPEECH CAREFULLY NOTED THAT THERE IS PROVISION FOR FOUR-YEAR
TERM FOR ASSEMBLY, BUT ALSO PROVISIONS FOR EARLIER DISSOLUTION.)
PENBERTHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPEECHES, LOWER HOUSE, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BELFAS00039
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740080-0906
From: BELFAST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740463/aaaacqql.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: WorrelSW
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2002 by bryansd0>; APPROVED <16 DEC 2002 by WorrelSW>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRELIMINARY REACTION TO N.I. SECRETARY OF STATE REES APRIL 4 STATEMENT ON ULSTER.
TAGS: PINT, (NI), (REES)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005